

THE ATLANTIC COAST



DAVID D. PORTER.

THE NAVY IN THE CIVIL WAR

VOLUME II.

THE ATLANTIC COAST

BY

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REAR ADMIRAL U. S. NAVY

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PREFACE.

IN acceding to a request to write the following pages, the writer had to regret that a brother officer had not undertaken the task, in the belief that the result would have more fully met the expectations of the public. With the view of presenting the facts as clearly as possible, the writer has not spared himself in the examination of whatever was within his reach, and trusts he may thus escape the just criticism of the intelligent reader, the more, too, as these sheets have received in advance of publication the criticism of several of the more prominent actors in the scenes.

The writer is indebted to an able friend for the criticism that these pages are largely made up of quotations, which is certainly the fact. This method has been adopted to give occurrences from every point of view obtainable where the quotation is apposite and not designed to be deceptive or meretricious. They sometimes differ considerably and honestly; each, however, is intended to present the occurrence from a given point of view. To these have been added such comment, narration, or connection as seemed pertinent and likely to afford the reader as clear an insight of the occurrence as may be possible. The writer would have gladly substituted a written detail and referred to his authorities

had he supposed that it would be equally interesting and profitable to the reader, as compared with diverse statements honestly made and from as many points of view as there were intelligent observers to be found. Official reports have been carefully examined, and, indeed, form almost wholly the basis of what is presented.

It is desired to avoid exaggeration and adulation, as far as possible, leaving as it were to the reader to put on the gloss, or enthusiastic appreciation, with his own hand, and to present the facts without prejudice to friend or foe. It is for the reader to assign the merit of the men engaged, sometimes under trying difficulties, whether it be in victory, in lack of actual success, or in defeat. The public can of course more readily appreciate brilliant success than a lack of it, yet oftentimes a less measure of success does not measure a less degree of professional skill or of courage.

The publishers purpose presenting the naval operations during our civil war in three volumes. The first would naturally comprise events precedent and immediate, and as many of these transpired within the Capes of Virginia, they and matters of primary interest, and matters relating to blockaders and blockade-runners, will be found in the volume written by Professor Soley, U. S. Navy. This volume, which may be regarded as the second, treats of naval operations from Cape Hatteras to Cape Florida, along the coasts, and within the sounds, rivers, and harbors of this watershed.

As an actuality, two centres of operations existed : the one at Port Royal, the dépôt of supplies and usual headquarters of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron ; the other within the sounds, and on the coast of North Carolina, over

which the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron held watch. In order to avoid confusion, the events of each section are treated separately.

It may be added that the writer commanded a vessel in the battle of Port Royal and in subsequent operations along that coast until May, 1863, and was also present in the two bombardments of Fort Fisher. He is under many obligations to the Navy Department, to the Chiefs of Bureau of Ordnance and Construction, and to Colonel Robert N. Scott, U. S. Army, for much valuable information not otherwise attainable, and also to several friends versed in naval and military affairs, for their kindly assistance.

WASHINGTON, May, 1883.

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